

Mohammad Akhlaghi

Diary of Pisa,

11th of August 2005

I woke up in at 6:30 in my hostel: "Ostello Villa Camerata", in Florence. I ate breakfast as one of the first people and after breakfast I checked out and went towards the bus stop. In the bus stop I waited until bus number 17 came and from there went to the SMN train station of Florence.

My ticket to Pisa was interesting; I could use the ticket I had in a period of one month with any train, any time (once)! So as soon as I got to the train station I waited for the first train for Pisa and as soon as it came I got on, I think it was around 8:00 or so! The train for Pisa wasn't a Eurostar train this time and its speed was lower. My train from Florence to Pisa passed Lucca, a city in north western Tuscany which was famous for a wall around the city. I did like to visit the city and it was really close to Pisa but I thought I won't have enough time to visit Pisa if I see Lucca so I went straight to Pisa.

One of the things that were really interesting for me in these train trips around Italy was that how green and interesting the intercity land was. It was all green and nearly everywhere there was some kind of house or village or something like that, not at all like most of the land of Iran that is an absolute desert and cities have long distances with each other. You can see a picture I took of a village from inside the train here.



I got off in the "Stazione Pisa Centrale" around 10:00. Contrary to its name which is "Central Pisa Station" it was south of the city! In the map I found an easy way to get to the Tower and the tourist complex of Pisa. As it was with Florence (that I felt good just by walking in it since I felt I am walking on the same place Michelangelo and other famous historical characters walked) I felt really nice, just to be in Pisa, since it made me feel a nice connection with Galileo; Galileo is actually the sign of honor for this tiny city.

The River Arno that passed through Florence passed through Pisa is well with nearly the same width. After getting off in the station, since I wanted to get on a train around 15:30 again, I gave my backpack to the baggage part of the train station that was a little farther then the place we got off! They took 3 euros and I was free!!! I sat in front of the station a little, analyzed the map and read a little about the city I then began walking straight towards the tourist center (the tower, the Baptistery and the Cathedral). I followed Corso Italia until Ponte Di Mezzo which was a bridge on the Arno River.



I was moving with a set of Chinese kids (they had got off some train and were headed to the same place I was!) but we had no conversation or any thing! I should just say that the weather was really humid, and the moment I got off the train I suddenly felt a layer of sweat made on my body! I was really hot during all of my stay in Pisa (not to



mention that the weather in Rome wasn't much

better!!!) But even though the weather was killing me I liked the city! It was small and you could see old people who had sat around different cafés. People just walked in the streets and you could hardly see any cars!

Altogether I really liked the city and walked with a lot of joy! I could feel a nice connection with Galileo which was really satisfying! Any way after I passed the Ponte Di Mezzo I went up Via Oberdan until I suddenly saw a sign showing the bent tower of Pisa and which had written tourist sight in Italian! As I got closer and closer I was getting more excited since I had always wished to see this great tower. Then suddenly from on top of the buildings I could see the tops of the bent Pisa tower.

As I got closer I saw the whole length of the bent tower and then I entered the Tourist sight of Pisa. I was expecting the tower to be much higher than this! Its height is around 50 meters which is (I think) the shortest of all the towers I had seen! But since I had enough time and nothing to worry about I just sat down in the grass around and watched the leaning tower and it's Cathedral.



The interesting thing I noticed in the field of grass to the right of the tower and nearly in front of the cathedral was a pole with a copy of the famous statue which they believe belongs to around 600 B.C. and is actually a she-wolf with two babies drinking milk from her breasts. The story of this statue is actually the mythological story of the foundation of the city of Rome, the two kids are "Romulus" and "Remus", they built Rome around the

Palatine Hill and Romulus was its first king (after killing his brother), then slowly in time it gets stronger until it gets one of the strongest civilizations in the world.

As it happened for Florence I don't know why I was so content of just being in this historical city I had always admired in my life, which was all the "content"cy I would need! It seemed to me I am already filled with joy of just being here and going inside the cathedral or up the tower or in the Baptistery wouldn't change my level of "content"cy!!! I don't know how to explain it better than this.

Besides that reason, I should say that the British pair I met in Florence told me they didn't go up since it's price is a little too high! (15 euros) I don't know what happened to me while I was over there that I didn't pay this money and go up! From the beginning of my trip I had told my self that "For historical sights don't even think of price, just pay!!! Don't worry it's worth it!" I didn't obey this law of mine in Pisa and somehow now I am angry of my self for acting like the British pair! There was one more reason and that was that I was afraid of not having time to wait in the line and then go up and see the place properly! All these things added and didn't let me buy tickets.



The Pisa cathedral was the only cathedral I saw which had a ticket of 2 euros which you would have to stand in a long line to get! If it was only the 2 euros I would give, but the

line was crazy since it was the same line for the cathedral and one of the few

museums in the district! The doors of the cathedral were interesting though! They had nice bronze work done on them, showing in different scenes some of the stories of the Bible.

In front of the cathedral (on the other side of the leaning tower) there was a circular baptistery which was really nice! Its out



side decoration was excellent and really attracting. The nice statue work outside the Baptistery were really interesting for me, they had made it look really nice.

On the other side and parallel to these three buildings with the same kind of architecture and color there was a long set of shops selling souvenirs for the tourists.



I walked around these shops and finally from one I bought two tiny statues, one was the leaning tower with a stick in his hand and raising his hat which had written "Hello from Pisa" on it, and another was a pen holder that had a statue of the leaning tower and a hunchback trying to keep it in place!



After walking around these shops I really got tired of staying in this place since I hadn't got any ticket for any where inside, and felt I have seen as much as I could, so I began searching around and I should say this is the first time the map of my guide book showed me a good internet point! I also saw they copy CDs after I went in, and saw it's price is excellent (2 euros) so I returned to the tourist sight and took as many films and pictures that I could, since it was nearly getting around 14:00 and my time was nearly finishing.



Then I returned to the internet point, checked my mails, copied the pictures of Florence and Pisa on a CD and walked towards the "Stazione Pisa Centrale", on the way I saw a nice building with nice paintings on it, I took two pictures of it (with an emptied memory

disk) and found my way back to the train station. There I got my bag, put all the unnecessary things inside it and went to my train. Luckily everything was on time, but I was surprised of how many lines for trains it had, I was walking for around 6 minutes to get to my platform underground! When I got there my train was waiting (it had come from north and was heading towards Rome) and I got on...



*Mohammad Akhlaghi
21st of September 2005*